

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Mass.
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE :

DIVISION OF HOUSING AND
TOWN PLANNING

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING
NOVEMBER 30, 1924



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE.

HOUSING AND TOWN PLANNING.

RICHARD K. CONANT, *Commissioner.*

Advisory Board.

ABRAHAM C. RATSHESKY, Boston, *Chairman.*

JEFFREY R. BRACKETT, Boston.

GEORGE C. CROMPTON, Worcester.

GEORGE H. McCLEAN, Springfield.

MRS. ADA ELIOT SHEFFIELD, Cambridge.

MRS. MARY P. H. SHERBURNE, Brookline.

EDWARD T. HARTMAN, *Visitor to Planning Boards.*

MISS MIRIAM I. ROSS, *Secretary.*

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

REPORT OF THE DIVISION OF HOUSING AND TOWN PLANNING.

Ten boards have been established or reorganized during 1924, while seven report inactivity for the year, and one has ceased to exist, making the total number of active planning boards in Massachusetts on December 1, 1924, sixty-eight. Boards not reporting which are known to be active have been left in the active list.

Of the active boards, eighteen are in towns of less than 10,000 inhabitants, where the law is permissive. Small towns are waking up to the fact that the best time to plan is before a place is ruined with injurious developments and at least twenty more of these smaller places are working for the formation of planning boards.

To facilitate their establishment the division has prepared and printed a leaflet on planning boards and their work. In this bulletin is outlined the powers and duties of planning boards, with emphasis on the need of zoning and building lines and the methods of obtaining both.

Earlier in the year a similar bulletin on the nature of the work which should be done by planning boards was published by the Massachusetts Federation of Planning Boards (Bulletin No. 13). This is already out of print.

ZONING.

Twenty-four cities and towns are now protected by zoning and twenty-eight places are at work on zoning plans, many of which will be presented for adoption at spring town meetings.

Repeated requests for information on how to zone decided the division to issue in printed form an outline of steps in the order in which they should be taken by planning boards anxious to work in a logical way. This was bulletin two of the division and covers the technique of zoning.

COURT DECISIONS AFFECTING ZONING.

In October four decisions were handed down by the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts. These decisions uphold three principles of zoning:—the so-called interim ordinance, the exclusion of stores from residence districts, and the single-family residence district.

The first of these decisions shows the Lowell interim ordinance to be "not unreasonable". The danger here will be the encouragement of the passage of temporary or interim ordinances, a step which is considered unwise except possibly for a few months pending the preparation of a comprehensive zoning plan. An interim ordinance which is allowed to become permanent is dangerous.

In the Milton case the petitioner had, before the adoption of the zoning by-law by the town, requested a permit to erect twelve stores. Issuance of the

331.83
M413r
1924
A

permit was delayed until a zoning by-law had been adopted by unanimous vote of the town meeting. The section of Milton in which the petitioner desired to erect the stores was an established residential section and it was held that the erection of commercial structures would make it less desirable for homes. The court went on to say: "The circumstance that the land of the petitioner could be used more profitably for commercial than for residential purposes is of slight significance and of no consequence in the broad aspects of the case. . . . The establishment of a strictly residential district, free from commercial or manufacturing business, may be thought to conserve the general health, safety and good order of the community. It cannot rightly be pronounced unreasonable."

The two Brookline cases are alike and bear upon single family residence districts established by an amendment to the Brookline zoning by-law. The original zoning by-law provided only for general residence districts. On March 18, 1924, an amendment was adopted which provided for single family residence districts. Prior to the adoption of the amendment permits were applied for to build two family houses on lots subsequently included in the one family districts. Permits were granted before the amendment was adopted, contracts had been made and work actually begun. After the adoption of the zoning amendment, however, these permits were revoked.

The arguments for one family houses are worth quoting here:—

"Restriction of the use of land to buildings each to be occupied as a residence for a single family may be viewed at least in two aspects. It may be regarded as preventive of fire. It seems to us manifest that, other circumstances being the same, there is less danger of a building becoming ignited if occupied by one family than if occupied by two or more families. Any increase in the number of persons or of stoves or lights under a single roof increases the risk of fire. A regulation designed to decrease the number of families in one house may reasonably be thought to diminish that risk. The space between buildings likely to arise from the separation of people into a single family under one roof may rationally be thought also to diminish the hazard of conflagration in a neighborhood. Statutes designed to minimize this hazard by regulations as to mechanical construction, air spaces and similar contrivances are familiar and have been upheld. . . . We cannot say that it may not be a rational means to the same end to require that no more than one family inhabit one house, where conditions as to population permit.

"It may be a reasonable view that the health and general physical and mental welfare of society would be promoted by each family dwelling in a house by itself. Increase in fresh air, freedom for the play of children and of movement for adults, the opportunity to cultivate a bit of land, and the reduction in the general spread of contagious diseases may be thought to be advanced by a general custom that each family live in a house standing by itself with its own curtilage. These features of family life are equally essential or equally advantageous for all inhabitants, whatever may be their social standing or material prosperity. There is nothing on the face of this by-law to indicate that it will not operate indifferently for the general benefit. It is matter of common knowledge that there are in numerous districts plans for real estate development involving modest single-family dwellings within the reach as to price of the thrifty and economical of moderate wage earning capacity.

"The question to be decided is not whether we approve such a by-law. It is whether we can pronounce it an unreasonable exercise of power having no relation to the public safety, public health or public morals. We do not see our way clear to do that."

In addition to upholding the single family provisions of the by-law this decision upholds the revoking of a permit in the following words:—

"The petitioners have no special and peculiar immunity arising from the fact that permits had been issued to them. They had begun work pursuant to those permits, although such work had not progressed very far. . . . Permits of the nature here in question do not constitute a pure personal privilege. When acted upon by the landowner, they cannot commonly be revoked by the licensing board in the absence of special power to that end or a change in

legislation. . . . The revocation of the permits in the case at bar rests exclusively upon the change in the by-law and not upon a change in the mind of the licensing officer. We have already decided that that by-law was a valid exercise of the power conferred upon the town by a constitutional statute. Since the petitioners had only barely begun work pursuant to their permits, they had acquired no vested rights against a change in the by-law by the exercise of the law-making power. The circumstance that contracts of the petitioners with third persons, entered into before the passage of the by-law, may be affected, does not impair the by-law in its constitutional phases when once it has been determined that in general it is a valid exercise of the police power. All property is held subject to the police power. . . . There is no exemption in the by-law as amended respecting the completion of work under permits already issued. . . .

"It seems plain to us that the work already done by the petitioners did not constitute 'existing structures' within the meaning of those two words in G. L. c. 40, sec. 29. In that connection those words signify something more than a mere beginning towards the erection of a building. . . .

"The result is that the petitioners fail to show any ground for relief."

LEGISLATION—1924.

Chapter 133 of the acts of 1924 is an amendment to the zoning enabling act of 1920. Under this amendment all boards of appeal must act in zoning cases which are brought before them. The amendment allows variance in the zoning law in special cases but this variance must hold to the spirit of the law and can be authorized only by a unanimous decision of the board of appeals. Court review is provided for in the case of persons aggrieved by decisions of the board.

In bulletin 14 of the Massachusetts Federation of Planning Boards this subject and the general subject of present day problems in zoning is treated.

Another step in advance for zoning was taken when the Boston zoning law, Chapter 488 of 1924, was passed by the Legislature. This was the result of careful study and enables Boston to take her place with the majority of the larger cities of the country which are now protected by zoning.

The Massachusetts Federation of Planning Boards worked hard to secure an amendment to the billboard law which would allow cities and towns to regulate outdoor advertising within their own territory without securing the approval of the Division of Highways as was required by the law previously passed. The result of their efforts is found in Chapter 327 of the Acts of 1924 which makes the State law adequate. It now rests with the cities and towns to pass local laws as they have long been anxious to do.

The subject of billboard regulation, with a copy of the State law and a sample by-law for towns, is covered in Bulletin 15 of the Federation.

LEGISLATION—1925.

For the coming year two bills will be presented to the Legislature. The first will again amend the zoning enabling act to allow the use of structures and premises to be regulated and the second, if passed, will be the next step toward the protection of the street plan and will be in the form of an amendment to the Board of Survey act. This proposed amendment is fully discussed in a recent bulletin of the Federation. (Bulletin No. 16.)

ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

The eleventh annual conference of Massachusetts planning boards was held in Worcester on October 6th. At this meeting the registered attendance was 103, representing 37 planning boards, officials, teachers and interested individuals.

The morning session was devoted to reports on the work of the year with special reports on regional planning in the Connecticut Valley, zoning as a civic awakener, and zoning for one family districts in Brookline.

At the afternoon session Mr. Philip Nichols outlined a plan for protecting the city plan. His speech was printed as Federation Bulletin 16, referred to above.

A special feature of the afternoon session was the question box conducted by the Hon. Edward M. Bassett. The questions were mainly on zoning and Mr. Bassett's clear, decisive answers helped to clear up many details.

During the evening the stories of Boston and Worcester zoning were told and Mr. Bassett again talked on the general subject of zoning and why we need it, outlining briefly New York's experience and the rapid development of zoning in this country since New York accepted her law in 1916.

Here is a significant statement made by Mr. Bassett at the close of his address:—

"Zoning has spread to three hundred and more municipalities of the United States. It has succeeded wherever it is not fantastic, wherever it is not an effort to translate private restrictions into zoning without regard to the health, safety, morals and general welfare of the community. Massachusetts, with its constitutional amendment and an excellent enabling act, is going to have just as sound zoning as anywhere in the United States if only people will stick to these fundamentals of the police power.

"Some ask, 'Is zoning constitutional?' You can just as well ask, 'Is taxation constitutional?' Zoning that is arbitrary, unreasonable, preferential, piece-meal, is not constitutional, just as taxation that is partial and piece-meal and arbitrary and not adapted to the facts is not constitutional."

NEW ENGLAND REGIONAL PLANNING.

A movement for the regional planning of New England has been started by the Federation of Planning Boards. The matter was presented to the Governors of New England at their annual conference. They turned it back to the Federation asking them to arrange a conference. The Governor's representative for Massachusetts was the Commissioner of Public Welfare who acted as chairman of the conference. Rhode Island and New Hampshire were represented and the following points were discussed and agreed upon:—

That the agencies already at work should be brought into closer relationship; that a survey should be made of the resources of New England, similar to that being made for New Hampshire as a state; that natural resources were the things largely going to waste and needing the most attention.

It was voted to hold another meeting at which the New Hampshire report should be the chief subject of study. The desire to get a definite movement under way seemed to be unanimous. The division agreed to get together all available information to serve as a basis for the regional survey.

The table below shows the present status of planning boards in Massachusetts cities and towns:

ACTIVE BOARDS—68		INACTIVE, 1924—7	NO BOARDS—9
Amesbury	Melrose	Cambridge	Adams
Amherst ¹	Methuen	Mansfield	Beverly
Arlington	Milford	New Bedford	Chelsea
Attleboro	Milton ¹	Northampton	Danvers
Bedford ¹	Natick	Reading	Greenfield
Belmont	Needham ¹	Revere	Marlborough
Boston	Newton	Southbridge	Newburyport
Bourne ¹	North Adams		Northbridge
Braintree	Norwood		Peabody
Brockton	Paxton ¹		
Brookline	Pittsfield		
Chicopee	Plymouth		
Clinton	Quincy		
Dedham	Salem		
Easthampton	Saugus		
Everett	Somerville		
Fairhaven ¹	Springfield		
Fall River	Stoneham ¹		
Falmouth ¹	Stoughton ¹		
Fitchburg	Taunton		
Framingham	Wakefield		
Gloucester	Walpole ¹		
Great Barrington ¹	Waltham		
Haverhill	Watertown		
Hingham ¹	Webster		
Holyoke	Wellesley ¹		
Lawrence	Westfield		
Leominster	Weston ¹		
Lexington ¹	West Springfield		
Longmeadow ¹	Weymouth		
Lowell	Winchester		
Lynn	Winthrop		
Malden	Woburn		
Medford	Worcester		

¹Towns under 10,000 population.

CITIES AND TOWNS WHICH HAVE BEEN ZONED—24

Brockton	November, 1920
Springfield	December, 1921 (Interim)
	December, 1922 (Final)
Winthrop	March, 1922
Brookline	May, 1922
Milton	July, 1922
Longmeadow	July, 1922
North Adams	September, 1922 (Interim)
Newton	December, 1922
Worcester	March, 1923 (Interim)
	December, 1924 (Final)
Lowell	April, 1923 (Interim)
West Springfield	May, 1923
Holyoke	September, 1923
Malden	December, 1923 (Interim)
Cambridge	January, 1924
Winchester	March, 1924
Lexington	March, 1924
Melrose	March, 1924
Swampscott	April, 1924
Haverhill	April, 1924 (Interim)
Dedham	May, 1924
Arlington	May, 1924
Medford	May, 1924 (Interim)
Boston	June, 1924
Chelsea	June, 1924 (Interim)

HOUSING EXPERIMENT AT LOWELL.

The condition of the housing experiment at Lowell remains unchanged with payments on the houses erected going on regularly.

A statement of the money spent and the money paid back into the State treasury is as follows:—

Appropriation (made in 1917)		\$50,000.00
Expenses:		
Land purchased, 7 acres with room for 40 houses, including also one house standing on lot	\$12,500.00	
Cost of 12 houses	28,128.77	
Improvements	2,626.77	43,255.54
		<hr/>
		\$ 6,744.46
Paid back to treasury in monthly instalments:		
Interest	\$ 8,415.75	
Principal	13,516.06	21,931.81
		<hr/>
Principal remaining unpaid Dec. 1, 1924		\$23,158.29

REPORTS OF PLANNING BOARDS.

AMESBURY.

Ten-year Highway Program.

A report of progress on a ten-year street construction program is made and the importance of a long look ahead is urged, from the standpoint both of economy and convenience. A classification of the types of highways has been made; of their approximate length, this data being supplied by the Post Office Department; and of their acceptance by the town. The study of the present condition of the streets is now being made.

Immediate adoption of some type of construction for the heavily traveled

roads which will reduce the maintenance, labor and cost is recommended. It is felt by the planning board that this type of construction should be reinforced concrete. Further recommendation is made that no highway of permanent construction be laid until suitable notice be given that all necessary underground repairs to pipes and cables be made in advance.

Municipal Center.

The proposed location for the municipal center is already seventy-six per cent owned by the town. Plans for its development were presented to the town but the planning board recommendation for a combined memorial building and town office building was at such variance with the report of the veterans memorial committee that a joint meeting of the two boards was held and an amended report is made, specific recommendations for the memorial to be made later. This plan allows for the general development of the municipal center, each building continuing to function until time for it to be replaced by a new building. This is in line with good planning, the plan for the whole to be made and held and all building or rebuilding to be in accordance with the plan.

Zoning.

The board is doing preliminary educational work in zoning and hopes to start work soon.

AMHERST.

Building districts for fire protection in the center of the town have been a subject for study in Amherst and regulations will be presented to the town meeting for adoption.

Zoning is under consideration.

ARLINGTON.

Zoning.

The zoning by-law was adopted in May, 1924.

Town Plan.

Work is under way on a comprehensive plan for Arlington and a partial report will be submitted to the town in March.

ATTLEBORO.

Zoning.

An appropriation for zoning was voted by the city in July, 1924, and an advisory committee on zoning was established. A consultant has been engaged and the zoning ordinance has been submitted to the Municipal Council.

Building Lines and Street Widening.

Recommendations are made for the establishment of building lines on certain main thoroughfares and for the widening of an important street.

Playgrounds.

Recommendation is made for the establishment of a playground on Union Street where a lot is owned by the City and where a playground is greatly needed.

BEDFORD.

Town Forest.

The planning board at the request of the town has studied the question of a town forest and recommends the acquisition of land for this purpose and the appropriation of \$100.00 for the setting out of seedling pines on a certain section of the watershed of the town water supply.

Zoning.

The need of zoning is again emphasized and the recommendation made that the town accept the zoning by-law prepared by the planning board a year ago.

BELMONT.

Zoning.

The board has been at work on a zoning map and by-law and intends to start on a comprehensive plan as soon as the zoning by-law is accepted.

Parks and Playgrounds.

Favorable action by the town is reported on the recommendation made last year for the establishment of a park commission and a playground and recreation commission.

BOSTON.

Zoning.

The Boston zoning law was passed in June, 1924, by the Massachusetts Legislature.

Major Street Plan.

A comprehensive street plan for the down-town section of the city was completed in 1924. This includes an Intermediate Thoroughfare 100 feet wide, with a number of related widenings and extensions. A special commission was established by the Legislature to further study this project and it will report to the next General Court. Plans for two of the related widenings were approved and the city authorized to go ahead with them.

Report on Commerce and Industries.

A compendium of reports and studies relating to the commerce and industries of Boston has this year been published by the board and it is believed that this will be of great value in future planning work.

Advisory Committee on Public Improvements.

At the request of the planning board the Mayor has appointed an advisory committee on public improvements comprised of men and women nominated by various civic organizations to work in co-operation with the planning board.

BOURNE.

A planning board was established in March, 1924. The year has been spent in studying problems and it is planned to take up the zoning of the town in the Spring.

BRAINTREE.

Street Widenings.

Several recommendations for street widenings made by the board a year ago were adopted by the town and a number of new recommendations on streets and sidewalk construction are being made this year.

BROCKTON.

Proposed changes in the Brockton zoning ordinance have come before the planning board for action and the board has passed on street extension plans before the board of survey.

Establishment of building lines, especially in and near the center of the city and acquisition of land for an athletic field is urged.

BROOKLINE.

Zoning.

The zoning by-law passed in 1922 was amended this year to provide one-family districts. The court decisions following this amendment are referred to and quoted in part on page 3.

Street Corners.

Recommendations are made for the rounding of dangerous corners or the establishment of building lines to allow clear vision at intersections of narrow streets.

Housing.

The evidence here as elsewhere indicates that zoning encourages the building of homes. The board reports improvement of the housing situation in Brookline, that apartments are kept in better repair and permits for dwelling houses for the past three years were issued as follows:—

1922 for 622 families

1923 for 646 families

1924 for 705 families.

Wooden Three-deckers.

The following extract from the report of the board is of interest. We should like to see the study carried further and the cost to the city or town of the wooden three-decker balanced against the cost to the city or town of the single family residence.

"The increase in rentals in all classes of apartments and houses has gradually forced tenants to seek less desirable homes to enable them to obtain rentals as near as possible to the amounts they had previously been paying. This has gradually but steadily forced a greater demand for the lowest-priced apartments and houses, with the result of increasing the rentals of this class of apartments greater proportionately than other classes of apartments. Actuated by a desire to relieve such conditions, particularly with reference to town employees, the Board of Selectmen referred to the Planning Board the questions of amending the building law to permit of the erection of three-apartment frame dwellings in certain sections of the town.

"Because of the great importance of stability in regulations governing the character of buildings which may lawfully be erected, it is not wise to change such regulations once deliberately adopted except for very strong reasons. The Board believes that the reasons which led the town to adopt this policy are in the main as strong as when the policy was adopted and in some respects stronger, and it did not appear to the Board that there was sufficient reason for a change. The margin of economy in favor of the wooden tenement house appears to be comparatively slight, if any. THE BUILDING COMMISSIONER WAS OF THE OPINION THAT UNDER PRESENT CONDITIONS THE COST OF MAINTAINING THREE-APARTMENT WOODEN HOUSES IN BROOKLINE IS ACTUALLY SO MUCH GREATER THAN THE COST OF MAINTAINING BRICK THREE-FAMILY HOUSES AS TO COUNTERBALANCE THE SAVING IN FIRST COST WITHIN A PERIOD OF TEN YEARS. The Board was of the opinion that the number of such buildings, which would in fact be erected within districts which the town would conceivably be willing to approve for such use, would be so small compared with the total supply of and total demand for housing accommodations of the sort with which they would compete, that any such fractional increase would tend to be absorbed promptly by the moving of additional tenants into Brookline from adjacent territory, and that the rents of the wooden tenement houses, thus erected, would stand in the same level as those for similar accommodations in their absence.

"The Board, therefore, did not approve of the proposed change in the building law, unless the town were prepared to open large areas for the erection of wooden tenement houses, and unless the change would lead to the erection of such houses in numbers large enough to materially affect the rental market of surrounding cities and towns along with Brookline, which did not appear at all probable."

Board of Survey.

The Board of Survey act was adopted in March, 1924, and it is the policy of the Selectmen, acting in the capacity of the Board of Survey, to refer to the planning board for approval all plans for streets and subdivisions.

Cottage Farm Bridge Traffic.

A detailed report and plan is submitted for a route to care for the traffic to and from Cottage Farm Bridge. This involves the co-operation of Boston and of the Metropolitan District as it is essentially a metropolitan rather than a local problem.

Building Lines.

A table of the building lines established in the period between 1897 and 1924 show building lines established on over twelve miles of streets, setbacks ranging from five to twenty feet.

CAMBRIDGE.

The Cambridge zoning ordinance was passed by the city in January, 1924. The board makes no report for this year.

CHICOPEE.

The planning board in Chicopee is working on a comprehensive zoning plan and ordinance.

CLINTON.

The zoning by-law, prepared by the planning board a year ago was turned down at the town meeting last Spring.

The traffic rules presented to the same town meeting were adopted and are now in force.

DARTMOUTH.

At the 1924 town meeting it was voted to establish a planning board, members to be elected in 1925.

DEDHAM.

Zoning.

By a practically unanimous vote the zoning by-law for Dedham was adopted by the town on May 5, 1924. The law is working well and is receiving many evidences of public approval.

Gift to the Town of Eastern Avenue Lands.

The town has acquired, partly by purchase and partly by gift, the Eastern Avenue lands at the heart of the town. A group of citizens became interested in this project to the extent of purchasing a section of this land and are giving it to the town.

Building Lines.

The board has made a survey of the town to determine in a systematic way the need of building lines. A report has been made to the Selectmen and action is hoped for at the Spring town meeting.

Park, Playground and Thoroughfare Plan.

Working toward a comprehensive plan, studies have been made on thoroughfares for handling through motor traffic. A plan has been prepared showing the locations of schools, parks and playgrounds and indicating future needs. Recommendation is made for securing lands for playgrounds in two specific locations where they are needed especially and where erection of new buildings would make them impossible because of the expense.

Swamp Areas.

Development of the swamp areas of Dedham has been the subject of a careful study and plans are formulating which will insure the bringing of these areas into fullest usefulness.

Street Plans for Outlying Sections.

Three separate districts of the town are being surveyed for the purpose of improving the street layout and linking up the districts with the rest of the town. The Board of Survey and the planning board are co-operating and taking of the necessary land before buildings are erected in the beds of the proposed streets is urged.

EASTHAMPTON.

The board recommends several projects to improve traffic conditions, the establishment of a Park Commission, the establishment of a town forest and zoning.

EVERETT.

The board is trying to awaken interest in the zoning movement and is at work on the problem of through traffic ways.

FAIRHAVEN.

The Fairhaven board is newly established and in its first year of existence reports as follows:—

Recommendation of the parking rules to relieve congestion at the center of the town.

Recommendation made to the Selectmen in regard to the location of gasoline filling stations.

Study of opportunities for reforestation. This study was made at the request of the town and the report is here quoted:—

"The planning board has investigated the matter of a Municipal forest as ordered by the town meeting of 1924, and herewith submits the following report:

"In the three centuries since the white race landed on these shores, the vast unbroken forest that covered all the northeastern portion of the country has been totally destroyed, and in memory of men now living, prices of rough sawed lumber advanced from \$3.00 to \$45.00 per thousand feet, with prospect of worse future shortage and higher prices.

"Lumber is a necessity of our civilization, not an individual but is affected by such conditions. They increase the cost of the house we live in, the rents we pay, transportation charges, clothing, food and utensils.

"Already forward-looking men have seen profit in planting forest trees for lumber. But a lumber crop is long in maturing. The profit is long deferred. Hence it is not probable that individual effort can be trusted to relieve the prospective lumber famine. Man's life is limited, but municipalities live on, and our towns are being urged to establish public forests. The idea is not new, municipal forests have existed and forestry has been practised in Europe for a thousand years, many of them paying annual dividends to their communities, and Japan, where until recently all structures were of wood, by the simple law 'Who cuts a tree must plant a tree,' has for 900 years supplied her own lumber needs.

"Twenty-three towns in Massachusetts have already established town forests. In some cases the lands have been donated, and some have been established as memorials. What can be grander or more enduring than a Memorial Forest? It is recommended that these forests be developed as wild, natural parks, where wild birds and animals should be protected. A tract of this kind within easy access of the settled portions of the town, properly planted, should in a few years become not only a most attractive wild park, but a most popular picnic ground for our citizens, young and old, and the experience of other towns indicates such would be the fact. This consideration alone would seem to warrant the enterprise.

"In outlying districts of the town the committee has located large areas, too hard and rocky, or too wet for agricultural purposes, much of it growing worthless scrub, but susceptible of growing good timber, which is now absolutely valueless to the owners as far as any revenue is concerned. Some of this it would seem impossible to obtain for a town forest at a fair price; perhaps, considering the purpose for which it is to be used, as in case of other towns, tracts might be donated.

"In view of these considerations, to bring the matter before the town meeting, we recommend the following article be inserted in the warrant:

"To see if the town will appropriate the sum of \$1,000.00 to be placed in the tax levy, to establish a town forest, the money to be expended by a special committee to be appointed by the Selectmen."

"It is estimated that \$1,000.00 should buy and plant with small white pines some 30 to 40 acres."

FALL RIVER.

No appropriation has been available for the work of the board this year. The problems of waterfront development and zoning are receiving further study.

FALMOUTH.

The Falmouth board is newly established this year and has been studying the ground and preparing the way for future work.

Zoning will be started in the Spring.

FITCHBURG.

Fitchburg reports that it is at work trying to solve its most serious problem of through traffic ways.

FRAMINGHAM.

Mt. Wayte Development.

The planning board, at the request of the Selectmen, are preparing a plan for the development of the Mt. Wayte section of the town. This will be submitted for action in the near future.

Street Improvement Plan.

Plans and recommendations have been made for the widening and extension of certain streets. Progress is reported in the improvement of Buckminster Square.

Neighborhood Playgrounds.

Play space for small children has been receiving the attention of the board and it is felt that in many instances land would be donated by owners if they could be sure that the town would do its part in the care and maintenance of these areas.

Zoning.

Zoning is under way and a use map has been prepared.

Reforestation.

Recommendations made a year ago on the subject of reforestation have been partially carried out with the planting of small trees on land owned by the town and a committee appointed by the town is studying the question of a town forest.

GLOUCESTER.

Late in the year the board was reorganized and it is hoped will prove active in 1925.

GREAT BARRINGTON.

This is a new board with no appropriation for their work but they are becoming interested in zoning and are at work on traffic and parking regulations.

HAVERHILL.

Zoning.

An interim zoning ordinance was adopted in Haverhill in April, 1924, while work on the comprehensive ordinance is progressing.

Betterment Law.

In compliance with a request from the Mayor, the board submitted a report on the feasibility of constructing a public way along the harbor line from Haverhill Lower Bridge westerly to City Landing No. 12. In this connection use of the betterment law is urged and a detailed report is made on the cost of engineering, filling, grading, paving, taking of land and so on.

HINGHAM.

Zoning.

Hingham is at work on zoning, the by-law is prepared and hearings are being held preparatory to presentation to the Spring town meeting.

Street and Playgrounds.

Recommendations have been made to the Board of Survey relative to the laying out of streets and lot areas and to the playground committees for a new playground in West Hingham.

HOLYOKE.

Holyoke reports the acquisition of a large tract of land lying just west of the business section of the city and its dedication as Anniversary Park on the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the city. This park ties up with other property belonging to the city and will in the future be developed into a parkway of great scenic beauty.

The board has been called into conference on various questions such as location and character of new school buildings, improvement of streets, playgrounds and a community field.

LAWRENCE.

Lawrence reports the board at work on a comprehensive plan and zoning and studying of through traffic ways.

LEOMINSTER.

Streets.

During the year the City Council has conferred with the planning board relative to the acceptance of certain streets, and the board has made recommendations to the Council in each case. Recommendations made by the board for the beautification of certain plots of land at the junction of streets are being carried out. The acquisition of land for the widening of Central Street from Monument Square to Central Square has been recommended.

Billboards.

The City Council has adopted the recommendations of the planning board by reporting against the granting of permits for the erection of billboards along the highways of the city.

Water Supply.

More land is needed for increasing the facilities for an additional municipal water supply.

LEXINGTON.

Zoning.

The report of the planning board covers the work of two years. The zoning law on which the board was at work a year ago was adopted by the town in March, 1924. The board reports:—"It is the opinion of the planning board, and we believe of all thoughtful citizens, that no act of the town has done more than this to protect the future of the town and to promote a livelier sense of civic duty and confidence."

Building Lines.

The residential districts are cared for in the zoning by-law and the board is at work on additional provisions which will be presented to the town for action.

Development Plans.

Proposed layouts for development of various tracts of land have been referred to the planning board for recommendations. These plans have received careful study and the Board of Survey has adopted the recommendations of the planning board in all but one case.

Advisory Board of Architects.

To supplement the zoning law the planning board is developing a scheme for an advisory board of architects to advise with those who purchase land and intend to build in Lexington. One large developer is co-operating and good results are anticipated.

Other problems on which the board is working include widening and extension of thoroughfares, billboard regulation and completion of the large scale map of the town.

LONGMEADOW.

No report.

LOWELL.

Zoning.

Lowell's interim ordinance has been in effect since April, 1923. The comprehensive ordinance has been prepared and presented to the City Council. The new ordinance provides for five classes of use districts. Promotional work is under way and it is hoped that the ordinance will be accepted soon.

Through Traffic.

Specific recommendations are made for a new traffic artery and a new bridge over the canal to relieve traffic congestion.

LYNN.

Zoning.

Lynn is at work on a comprehensive zoning plan and ordinance and is protected temporarily by an interim ordinance.

MALDEN.

No report.

Malden's interim zoning ordinance was passed in December, 1923, and work is going forward on the comprehensive plan and ordinance.

MANSFIELD.

Mansfield reports inactivity during 1924.

MEDFIELD.

At the 1924 town meeting it was voted to establish a planning board, members to be elected in 1925.

MEDFORD.

Zoning.

An interim zoning ordinance for Medford, prepared by a lawyer member of the planning board at the request of the City Council, was passed in May, 1924. Work is in progress on the comprehensive plan and ordinance.

Railroad Station.

The matter of a new railroad station was left to the Boston and Maine officials and the Planning board. The station was finally built at the corner of River Street; Riverside Avenue and Salem Street have been widened and the widening of River Street is urged to further improve the Square.

MELROSE.

The Melrose zoning ordinance was passed in March, 1924.

The board this year has been at work on assessment maps, the High School pupils being used to collect data; regional throughfares; and public parking space.

METHUEN.

The Methuen planning board was reorganized and has been very active this year.

Street Improvements.

With the co-operation and assistance of the Superintendent of Streets traffic conditions, especially in relation to rounding street corners, have been improved, in each case necessary land being donated to the town, this causing the town to pay only the expenses of construction.

Playground Recommended.

At the last town meeting the planning board was instructed to investigate and report on the advisability of acquiring seven and one-half acres of land adjoining the playstead. The board unanimously recommends the acquisition of this land at the cost of \$750.00 and that a part of this be filled as soon as possible and added to the present ball field, that eventually a small park and automobile parking space be developed in the north end of the tract, the work to be done a portion each year until the scheme is fully carried out.

Survey of Town.

A survey of the town is under way and the board is considering the question of zoning.

MILFORD.

No report.

MILTON.

Single Residence Districts.

Milton is considering an amendment to her zoning by-law to provide one-family districts.

Traffic.

More adequate traffic ways are needed in Milton and the board is at work on a solution of the problem.

NATICK.

Natick is at work on a zoning and building code which will soon be ready for presentation to the town.

NEEDHAM.

Zoning.

The planning board is working on a zoning by-law which will be presented to the town in March.

Through Traffic Ways.

Through traffic ways are now receiving attention and a thoroughfare plan is much needed.

NEW BEDFORD.

No report.

NEWTON.

Building Lines.

Newton reports sixteen and three-quarters miles of building lines established through the efforts of the planning board.

Comprehensive Plan.

The board is still working for the adoption of the comprehensive plan, particularly the main thoroughfare plan, which is greatly needed to make the city function adequately.

Single Family Districts.

Another place where the zoning ordinance does not provide single residence zones desires to amend the law to make this provision.

NORTH ADAMS.

Zoning.

The comprehensive zoning ordinance to supersede the interim ordinance adopted in 1922 has been presented to the City Council for action.

Billboards.

The planning board has been asked to make recommendations on applications for the renewals of permits for billboards throughout the city. The policy has been to recommend that all billboards on the State highways be removed and that no renewals of permits on the main street connecting these highways be granted.

Recommendations.

Specific recommendations are made for the publishing of the report on the city plan, for the adoption of the zoning ordinance, for the establishment of the Cambridge Plan of Assessment, and for certain highway improvements.

NORTHAMPTON.

The Northampton board reports inactivity for 1924. Zoning is under consideration and through traffic ways are a problem for study.

NORWOOD.

No report.

PAXTON.

Zoning.

By a special committee was prepared a zoning by-law, in the nature of an interim law. This was adopted by the town. A comprehensive law is being considered by the planning board, newly established this year.

Town Forest.

The planning board realizes the desirability of establishing a town forest and has been requested by the town to further study this question and report to the town.

Street Names.

The town has asked the board of survey and the planning board to submit a street naming plan to the town meeting for adoption.

PITTSFIELD.

Pittsfield reports their board at work on a comprehensive plan and consideration of zoning.

PLYMOUTH.

Through Traffic Ways.

Realizing that no adequate relief can be secured by the widening of existing highways, the board has made, with the help of expert services, a study of plans for two new highways. One would meet the requirements of those visiting historic Plymouth. The second would take care of the through traffic. State co-operation is desired in carrying out this project. Recommendation is made that the Selectmen petition the County Commissioners for the construction of a new street from Kingston to Plymouth. Widening of Union Street is also urged, as the work can be done now at the lowest cost.

QUINCY.

Quincy Square.

Co-operation of the city officials and of individuals is urged in forwarding the plan of the Division of Metropolitan Planning for the relief of traffic in Quincy Square.

Building Lines.

A study has been made of the streets needing building lines and rounded corners. The planning board is working on this problem with a committee of the city council.

Billboard Ordinance.

A billboard ordinance has been drafted and presented for adoption. This ordinance is the one suggested as a model by the billboard committee of the Massachusetts Federation of Planning Boards.

Zoning.

Preliminary work on a zoning plan and ordinance is under way and a survey of present uses is about one-half completed.

READING.

No report.

REVERE.

The Revere planning board reports inactivity in 1924.

SALEM.

A zoning plan and ordinance has been prepared and presented to the City Council. Public hearings have been held and action on the ordinance is expected in the Spring.

SAUGUS.

The planning board in Saugus was established in January, 1924.

Sewage Disposal.

By vote of the town the planning board was requested to study and report on the question of sewage disposal. A very good report with three possible methods of approaching the problem was submitted and an appropriation for the necessary survey of the town will be requested.

Sidewalks.

The planning board recommends adoption of a systematic plan of sidewalk improvement.

Road Construction.

The board has considered the problem of road construction and urges the laying of curbs at proper grades before extensive road surfacing is done.

Under consideration for further study are the questions of transportation, playgrounds and school sites, and zoning.

SOMERVILLE.

Fire Districts.

The ordinance recommended a year ago for the establishment of fire districts has been passed and the building code submitted at the same time is still before the Board of Aldermen.

Playgrounds.

Favorable action has been taken on the board's recommendation for a playground in one section of the city. The board recommends the taking of additional land for playgrounds in other sections where they are greatly needed.

Recommendations are also made for the taking of land on the Mystic River Front to be utilized as a wharf by the city, for the establishment of a more scientific system of assessing and for an appropriation for zoning.

SOUTHBRIDGE.

The planning board reports inactivity for 1924.

SPRINGFIELD.

City Plan.

During the year a city plan for Springfield was completed. This plan has been accepted by the city and is very far-reaching and comprehensive in its scope.

Traffic.

Detour routes, elimination of trolleys from the civic center, and traffic regulation help the situation greatly in Springfield.

Problems.

Railroad relocation, riverfront development and circumferential thoroughfares are considered problems still to be solved by the planning board.

STONEHAM.

Zoning.

The entire attention of the planning board has been given to zoning during this year and the by-law and maps will be ready for presentation to the voters at the Spring town meeting.

STOUGHTON.

The finance commission-planning board is at work on plans and surveys preparatory to the installing of a new sewer system.

An improved water supply with a new standpipe is recommended and a new or at least remodelled pumping station.

Plans have been approved for the building of a new two-room brick school house to replace one destroyed by fire. The plans allow for the addition of one or more rooms later.

TAUNTON.

Recommendations on several street improvements, store locations, filling stations and billboard locations, referred to the planning board, were made to the Municipal Council.

Zoning.

Educational work towards zoning is being done.

Board of Survey.

The Board of Survey recommended by the planning board a year ago was established this year.

Parking Space.

Recommendation is repeated for the taking of a certain piece of land and its development as a public parking space.

WAKEFIELD.

Wakefield's zoning by-law, defeated in town meeting last Spring, is again recommended to the town for acceptance. The comprehensive plan for the town is submitted with the report of the board and it is to be hoped that both will receive favorable attention. The board in presenting the plan sums up its arguments as follows:—

"Most of the things get done in every community in time and after a fashion. Too often these inevitable improvements come too late. They have to be fitted in as best they can be and cost much more than they should. We must have streets, homes and schools and if we are to enjoy life we must have open spaces and playgrounds.

"It will cost less to do these things right and in a well planned way than it will to do them in a poorly thought out piece-meal way and the results in the long run will be vastly different.

"Thousands of dollars can be saved to the town by a more strict and careful consideration of plots before they are accepted. With a general plan of broad improvements outlined, most people will be glad to fall in line with the general scheme and profit by the results that are more far reaching than their own boundaries.

"The purchase of school grounds, park land, playgrounds, and land for other public use in advance of improvements and before the circumstances have forced action would be another means of effecting large savings.

"The acceptance and the establishment of a standard section for different types of streets would make it possible to develop different parts at different times and know that the whole would be a unit when completed. There would also be a saving in buying and in maintenance in having standard sidewalk widths, curb corners, catch basins, etc.

"Street trees cost very little to buy and set out, yet in a few years they change the entire appearance of a street and affect materially its value for residential purposes.

"Many places suffer from lack of co-operation between various property owners and between property owners and the town, in the carrying out of developments. Outside operators come in, buy up tracts of land and place them on the market for building. Their whole object is a quick turn over and their permanent interest in the town, nothing. The creation of local building companies and development associations whose members are identified with Wakefield and who have the future of the town at heart, would prevent to a great degree the evils that come from the other method.

"A town can be what the local people want it to be, or what their indifference permits it to be. It is bound to be a composite expression of those who live in it."

WALPOLE.

Zoning.

Walpole is at work on zoning and will present her plan and by-law at the Spring town meeting.

Sidewalk Construction.

Construction of sidewalks on streets having the heaviest traffic and where there is no safe place to walk is urged, the first of these sidewalks to be built in 1925.

Town Park.

Beginnings have been made on the Town Park recommended in a previous report, the first step in the development being the Memorial Bridge.

WALTHAM.

Waltham is at work on a comprehensive plan and zoning. Through traffic ways are a very serious problem and the board is studying this subject.

WATERTOWN.

School Sites and Playgrounds.

Selection and reservation of locations for future schools, parks and playgrounds while the land is still available is recommended.

Telephone Exchange.

The planning board is working with the telephone company to obtain an exchange for Watertown as great confusion has resulted in having Watertown residents listed under the name of another place.

Billboard Regulation.

Recommendation is made that the town pass the by-law regulating billboards suggested by the Massachusetts Federation of Planning Boards.

WEBSTER.

The board mentions several important problems which have received the attention of the board:—a better development at the lake and neighboring sections; the acquisition of land while it is still available and the construction of new through traffic routes; the establishment of a building code; cleanliness of streets and yards; and the study and adoption of a simplified form of town government.

WELLESLEY.

No report.

Wellesley is at work on a zoning by-law which will be presented to the town meeting in the Spring for action.

WESTFIELD.

No report.

WESTON.

A comprehensive plan will be presented to the town meeting in March and a zoning plan is in preparation.

The board is working on recommendations to be presented to the town relative to the granting of licenses for garages, filling stations and wayside markets.

WEST SPRINGFIELD.

Recommendations for certain street widening and improvements have been made and certain changes in the zoning by-law are suggested.

The planning board has recommended combining the board of survey and the planning board and a bill is to be presented to the Legislature requesting authority to do this.

WEYMOUTH.

The board is becoming active again and will this year ask for an appropriation for zoning. The board is also instrumental in preparation of an article for the town warrant which will reduce the number of members of the planning board from twenty-five to seven.

The planning board is also trying to get the town to accept sections 3 to 12 of Chapter 143 of the General Laws as Weymouth is without any building regulations of any kind since the repeal of the town tenement house act a year ago.

WINCHESTER.

Comprehensive Town Plan.

A two-year study on a comprehensive plan for the town is completed this year and the report, with an excellent set of maps, is presented to the town. In his report the consultant says:—

"Less and not greater cost is involved when town growth is guided by planning. If any part of such a plan is found wanting at any time, that part should be corrected and the plan thus bettered. Fear that some part of a good general plan may be found wanting, now or later, does not justify proceeding without a plan. On the contrary this fear confirms the need of proceeding with a plan which can be kept constantly under scrutiny for improvement the moment such an opportunity is found.

"A good general plan for Winchester ought to conserve the natural attractiveness of the town as a place of residence, business and industry, and guide its growth in directions which will not lead to waste of money or opportunity, and which will not prevent too rapid change of those appearances of the town which give it special charm and character."

Zoning.

The zoning by-law was passed in March, 1924, and there is a general feeling of satisfaction in the working of this law.

Property Developments.

The following statement of co-operation is a bit of encouraging evidence of the growth of popularity of planning boards:—

"The Board has been represented at various hearings held by the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Survey. Most of these hearings were on the acceptance of streets and the establishment of building lines. It has been noticed the past year that in the hearings of the Board of Survey, the owners of projected subdivisions of areas of land have expressed a willingness to co-operate with the suggestions of the Planning Board, recognizing that in the long run an orderly development of property with due regard to the interests of surrounding property and of the town as a whole is more profitable."

WINTHROP.

Zoning.

Amendment of the zoning by-law to make it more comprehensive is under consideration. Especially it is desired to include building line provisions through zoning.

Traffic.

Street widenings, traffic regulation and dangerous corners have received attention and specific recommendations on these questions are made.

Garage Permits.

Requests and permits for community garages have been referred to the planning board by the Selectmen and the Building Inspector and reports have been made in each case by the board.

WOBURN.

No report.

Woburn is at work on zoning.

WORCESTER.

No report.

A comprehensive report has been made on zoning and the board is at work on a city plan.





